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Security Council

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Letter dated 2 June 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should like to draw your attention to paragraphs 15 and 16 of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2016/452), where the expression "forces loyal to General Khalifa Haftar" is used instead of the term "Libyan army". This appears to be an insult to hundreds of officers and thousands of troops because it implies that they are loyal to an individual rather than to their homeland and to the legitimate authority that finances the army and supplies it with weapons. It is not in keeping with the neutral role that the United Nations is supposed to be playing in Libya and undermines the Libyan Political Agreement.

The Libyan army is the sole regular armed force recognized by the Libyan House of Representatives, which, alongside the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, is one of the two legitimate authorities recognized by the Political Agreement. It is the authority before which General Khalifah Haftar swore his oath when he was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan army, and also the authority that appointed General Abdulrazzaq Nazuri as Army Chief of Staff. General Nazuri is also the focal point for the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, and is responsible for signing end-user certificates for exemptions from the arms embargo against Libya.

Whatever the differences of opinion about the Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan army, that army is an institution with a presence on the ground in all parts of Libya. It should be a party to any resolution to the crisis in Libya and should have a major role in formulating Libya's security and defence policies through the Ministry of Defence of the Government of National Accord.

The contents of the report confirm that the Secretary-General's Special Representative in Libya and the Department of Political Affairs have accepted the propaganda of armed groups and political movements hostile to the army and the police. On 30 May 2016, in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Journal du Dimanche*, Martin Kobler said that Haftar does not have an army or any territory that he controls fully, as he claims, and that his army is more a patchwork of regular forces, former Qadhafi loyalists, mercenaries from the Sudan and Chad, and some tribal forces.

That statement has no basis in fact, and is a barefaced slander against the Libyan army for which the Secretariat and Mr. Kobler must apologize.

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I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibrahim O. A. **Dabbashi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

S/2016/509

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United Nations A/70/909–S/2016/509

General Assembly
Security Council

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2 June 2016

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventieth session
Agenda item 44
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Letter dated 31 May 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 27 May 2016, addressed to you by a representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mehmet Dânâ (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Güven Begeç
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative

16-09016 (E) 070616

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Annex to the letter dated 31 May 2016 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 16 May 2016 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (A/70/882-S/2016/451), which yet again contains false assertions similar to those made in his previous letters. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

At the outset, regarding the claims of so-called "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey", I wish, once again, to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent authority to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace. As for the false assertions regarding the "illegally issued ... Notice to Airmen", it must be underlined that activities within the Ercan advisory airspace that require notices to airmen are carried out by and coordinated with the relevant authorities of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Similarly, the claim in the letter regarding the Turkish Cypriot ports is also baseless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, this claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As to the repeated false allegations regarding Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its isolation policy that has been imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or control.

Moreover, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to perpetuate by encouraging the international community to deem all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus as "illegal", is in complete contravention of international law, as well as of the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), in which he clearly states: "I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that

have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)."

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, providing safe and swift navigation of aircraft landing at or taking off from Ercan Airport and using airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary investments have been made to keep up with the developing technology. The number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the increasing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2015 alone, the number of passengers that used Ercan Airport stood at nearly 3,500,000 (compared to 3,250,000 in 2014), while a 7 per cent increase in that number is expected in 2016. Moreover, in 2015, nearly 26,000 planes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure, and around 210,000 planes used the Ercan advisory airspace, a total which is expected to increase by 7 per cent in 2016. In that respect, it must be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

At a time when the comprehensive settlement negotiations are progressing swiftly in a result-oriented atmosphere, I deem it necessary to stress the need to fully channel all our efforts towards achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus conflict in line with the established United Nations parameters and the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, which envisage a new partnership on the basis of the political equality of the two peoples of the island within the framework of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with two constituent States of equal status. Moreover, the Greek Cypriot administration should once again be reminded that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric, which is not reflective of the joint vision and cooperation expressed by the leaders of both communities on the island since the resumption of the settlement talks in May 2015. As the two future partners in the island of Cyprus, we should never lose sight of the fact that the solution of the Cyprus problem will comprehensively deal with all pending issues between the two sides and thus focus all our efforts towards the ultimate goal of settlement.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that, as the Turkish Cypriot side, we are committed to maintaining our constructive and positive stance within the context of your good offices mission in Cyprus and encourage our Greek Cypriot neighbours to follow a similar path.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mehmet Dânâ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

S/2016/
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United Nations S/2016/510

Security Council

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8 June 2016
English
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Letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the Special Report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). This report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2228 of 29 June 2015 and the African Union Peace and Security Council Communiqués of 22 June 2015 (516th meeting) and 31 July 2015 (529th meeting). It presents the outcome of a recent assessment of the situation in Darfur and of progress made towards the implementation of the UNAMID benchmarks for the period of 1 July 2015 to 15 May 2016.

I should be grateful if you would bring this report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

For her part, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, is taking appropriate steps to bring the report to the attention of the members of the African Union Peace and Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

16-08424 (E) 080616

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Special report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

[Original: English]

I. Introduction

1. In Security Council resolution 2228 (2015) of 29 June 2015 and the communiqués of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union of 22 June 2015 (516th meeting) and 31 July 2015 (529th meeting), the two Councils extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for a period of 12 months and reiterated their endorsement of the mission and reiterated their endorsement of the mission's revised strategic priorities, as set out in paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2148 (2014), namely: (a) mediation between the Government of the Sudan and non-signatory movements on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, while taking into account the ongoing democratic transformation at the national level; (b) the protection of civilians, the facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel; and (c) support for the mediation of community conflict, including through measures to address its root causes, in conjunction with the United Nations country team. The two Councils further stressed that any refinement of UNAMID should be based on progress against the benchmarks as set out in the report of the Secretary-General of 16 October 2012 (S/2012/771) and subsequently refined in his reports of 25 February 2014 (S/2014/138) and 15 April 2014 (S/2014/279, annex).

2. The present report presents the outcome of an assessment of the situation in Darfur and progress made towards the implementation of the benchmarks for the period from 1 July 2015 to 15 May 2016. The assessment was conducted jointly by the African Union Commission, the Secretariat of the United Nations, the United Nations country team and UNAMID, and provides recommendations on the mission's future mandate. The assessment was further informed by a troop-to-task analysis of military and police personnel, which presents recommendations on how to improve the operational effectiveness of UNAMID. Finally, the report provides an update on the status of in tripartite discussions on the exit strategy of UNAMID between the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan and makes recommendations on the way forward.

II. Overview of conflict dynamics, humanitarian situation and political developments

A. Conflict dynamics

3. In the absence of progress towards a comprehensive political agreement that addresses the root causes of violence, the conflict in Darfur has persisted. Fighting between the Government of the Sudan forces and the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) continued in Jebel Marra during the reporting period. Intercommunal fighting and incidents of violence against the civilian population by

criminal groups and militias have continued to spread, despite the Government's efforts to contain them. With tens of thousands of people newly displaced in 2016 and approximately 2.6 million remaining displaced in Darfur, civilians across the region continue to bear the consequences of the volatile security situation.

Fighting between the Government of the Sudan and armed movements

4. Following the first two phases of the Government of the Sudan's military offensive (from February 2014 to June 2015), known as Operation Decisive Summer, which resulted in the significant weakening of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) in Darfur, UNAMID received no reports of fighting between Government forces and those two armed movements during the reporting period, apart from a claim by SLA/MM of having repelled an attack by the Rapid Support Forces on Wadi Maghreb, north of Kutum, North Darfur. After confining SLA/AW to a very limited geographic area in Jebel Marra in early 2015, Government forces focused their most recent military offensive on dislodging the armed movement from the mountainous area. SLA/AW resisted such an outcome through asymmetric warfare and highly mobile forces, which utilized their dispersed geographical footprint to limit the impact of aerial bombardment and the advance of the Rapid Support Forces and Sudanese armed forces infantry.

5. In January 2016, the Government announced the beginning of a major military operation on SLA/AW positions in Jebel Marra, accusing the rebel movement of looting and attacking civilian, military and commercial convoys in the area. Prior to that announcement, towards the end of 2015, Government officials had described SLA/AW as a major threat to the Darfur peace process and commenced a gradual build-up in several localities in Jebel Marra, believed to be under the armed movement's control. For their part, SLA/AW elements entrenched in remote areas in the foothills of Jebel Marra launched occasional ambushes on convoys of Government forces, especially on the roads between El Fasher, Nyala and Zalingei. Following one such ambush on a Sudanese armed forces convoy near Dabaneira, north of Golo, Central Darfur, on 2 January 2016, additional Sudanese armed forces infantry units and other forces, including the Rapid Support Forces, converged on Jebel Marra.

6. The latest phase of the Government's counter-insurgency operations was launched on 14 January 2016, with a series of aerial bombardments on supposed SLA/AW locations near Sortony and Tawila in North Darfur and Nertiti in Central Darfur. Owing to the intensity of the attacks, SLA/AW took refuge in the mountainous areas between Nertiti and Rockero, Central Darfur, while the Sudanese armed forces claimed to have taken several of the armed movement's strongholds in South Darfur, thereby securing major road access into Jebel Marra. From 22 January, with the support of aerial bombardment, Government forces launched a ground offensive north-east and north-west of Rockero and east and south-east of Nertiti. Government forces claimed to have seized most of Jebel Marra in the ensuing fighting. SLA/AW, in turn, claimed to have repelled Government attempts to capture Kalokitting and reportedly captured the areas of Kutrum and Kalow, east of Nertiti.

7. Throughout March and April, ground fighting and aerial bombardment continued in areas south-west of Rockero and south-east of Golo in Central Darfur

and north of Kas in South Darfur. After several days of reportedly fierce resistance from SLA/AW, on 12 April, the Sudanese armed forces announced the capture of Sorrong, south-east of Golo, which it described as the last rebel stronghold in Jebel Marra. With the capture of Sorrong, the Government declared an end to the rebellion in all five states of Darfur. SLA/AW have reportedly retreated to Daya and Torongtonga, located east and south-west of Sorrong. Reports of fighting and aerial bombardment in Jebel Marra have continued. UNAMID remained unable to verify the outcome and impact thereof on the civilian population, owing to the Government's continued denial of access to conflict areas in Jebel Marra.

Intercommunal conflict

8. The causes of intercommunal conflict are inherently linked to those of the broader Darfur conflict. Historically, this form of violence arose mainly between nomadic herder and sedentary farming communities over the ownership and use of resources, such as land. Since the beginning of the conflict, efforts to address such violence have failed to provide sustainable solutions, owing to the sociodemographic effects of drought, the consequences of the war and the erosion of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and land management structures. The ongoing rebellion and counter-insurgency operations in Darfur have significantly polarized Arab and non-Arab communities, thereby increasing the intensity of intercommunal fighting, particularly in terms of its impact on the civilian population. The situation has been further exacerbated by the widespread proliferation of weapons and the inadequacy of rule of law and judicial institutions, which contributes to a culture of impunity and the weakening of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and reconciliation processes. The arming of militias and the politicization of such conflicts have increased tensions and led to regular flare-ups of violence, as state-level efforts to address land use, resource-sharing, the return of and compensation for internally displaced persons remain insufficient.

9. In 2015, intercommunal fighting resulted in approximately one third of all conflict-related fatalities and accounted for over 40 per cent of the people displaced in Darfur. Key land ownership disputes such as the one between the Berti and the Zayadiya in Malha, Al Kuma and Mellit in North Darfur remained unresolved. After the resumption of fighting between the Berti and the Zayadiya in July 2015, the North Darfur State government facilitated the signing of separate cessation of hostilities agreements between the Berti and the Zayadiya, while additional Sudanese armed forces troops were deployed to the affected areas to stabilize the situation.

10. Similarly, following attempts by the Sudanese authorities to reconcile the positions of the Ma'alia and the Southern Rezeigat tribes on their dispute over land ownership in Abu Karinka and Adila, East Darfur, a livestock theft incident in Khor Thaan village, south of Labado, reignited the conflict between them in April 2016. Following that incident, coupled with the attempts by the Governor of East Darfur to impose security in the state and to renegotiate the Marawie agreement, which was proposed in February 2015, the Southern Rezeigat accused the Governor of supporting the Ma'alia in the dispute. Following an attack on the Governor's residence in Ed Daein by Southern Rezeigat militia the next day, additional Sudanese armed forces troops were deployed in the buffer zone between the two communities and to enhance security in the State capital. In the absence of a reconciliation process to address the land and resources issue, tensions between

these communities remained high, resulting in several security incidents in late April and early May.

11. The proliferation of arms, impunity and the inadequacy of rule of law and judicial institutions perpetuated a scenario whereby a single act of cattle rustling easily escalated into a broader and very violent intercommunal conflict. In South Darfur, fighting between the Salamat and Fallata tribes in Al Nadif, in Buram locality, in August 2015, led to 83 fatalities on both sides. Despite the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the two tribes in September 2015, fighting once again resumed in February 2016, resulting in 35 deaths. Following the latest round of fighting, Sudanese authorities arrested 80 persons suspected of involvement in the clashes. Both parties reiterated their commitment to the September 2015 peace agreement and called for the wide dissemination of the agreements, particularly at the grass-roots level.

12. Also as a result of cattle rustling, fighting occurred between the Beni Halba and Massalit, and between the Awlad Rahma and Gimir, in areas south and east of El Geneina in West Darfur. In late November and early December 2015, heavily armed militia attacked the Zaghawa-inhabited villages in and surrounding Anka, North Darfur, killing at least seven civilians, burning homes and causing the displacement of approximately 150 families to the camp for internally displaced persons in Um Baru, North Darfur. Conflicts over the use of and access to farmland between farmers and nomadic herders remained prominent throughout Darfur during the farming season, which coincides with the north-south livestock migration from May to November each year.

B. Humanitarian situation

13. During the past year, the Darfur conflict displaced additional civilians, adding to the existing significant and protracted displacement and affecting people's access to basic services, food security and livelihood opportunities. The conflict contributed to new explosive remnants of war contamination in 71 villages, where 533 explosive items were located and disposed of. Humanitarian actors estimated the number of internally displaced persons in Darfur at over 2.6 million, 1.6 million of whom remained in camps and at least 2 million of whom were in need of humanitarian assistance. Some 2.7 million people now face crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity in Darfur. Although some of those displaced have returned to their homes, including an estimated 70,000 people since the beginning of 2015, many have chosen to remain in camps or in settlement and urban areas. Safety and security, land ownership and access to basic social services were the most frequently cited primary conditions for their return. An additional 300,000 Sudanese refugees remained in Chad. Almost 50,000 South Sudanese have also recently arrived in East and South Darfur.

14. Tens of thousands of people were newly displaced as a result of the resumption of fighting in Jebel Marra since the beginning of 2016. As of 10 May 2016, humanitarian partners had verified some 68,000 people who had to flee their homes owing to the conflict, of whom close to 65,000 remain displaced. In addition, there have been reports, which are yet to be verified, of up to 106,000 persons having been displaced. In North Darfur, the humanitarian response continued for some 60,000 newly displaced persons at Sortony, Tawila, Kabkabiya and Shangil

Tobaya. Efforts are currently under way to verify the displacement figures after an initial registration exercise by the International Organization for Migration was suspended in February. In Central Darfur, humanitarian actors are still unable to independently verify reports of displacement. The Government has reported over 15,000 new internally displaced persons in the state. In South Darfur, 16,700 persons have been reported displaced, with over 8,000 registered.

15. On 28 December 2015, during a visit to Darfur, the Second Vice-President of the Sudan, Hassabo Mohamed Abdelrahman, announced Government plans to "put an end to the displacement in Darfur before 2017" and that internally displaced persons would be requested to choose between returning to their places of origin or being re-classified as part of the population of the localities in which they currently reside. The Government has subsequently indicated that, as part of what has been described as a voluntary process, internally displaced persons would be provided with security, education, health care, water and other services and possibly even land, for those who were dispossessed of it during the conflict. According to the Government, the measures form the next logical step in the full implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in the aftermath of the Darfur administrative referendum and the upcoming expiration of the mandate of the Darfur Regional Authority.

C. Political developments

16. In its communiqué of 25 August 2015, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union requested the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for the Sudan and South Sudan to continue its engagement with Sudanese stakeholders towards ensuring a credible, inclusive and transparent national dialogue process and facilitating negotiations for a cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas.

17. Following the formation of the new Government of the Sudan, in June 2015, the ruling National Congress Party maintained its position that the national dialogue process remained national in character and rejected the holding of a pre-dialogue meeting under the auspices of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel. The major opposition political parties and armed movements in the Sudan continued to call for such a meeting to determine the format of the dialogue process and establish the necessary preconditions for their participation, particularly with respect to the security of their members.

18. On 10 October 2015, the President of the Sudan, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, opened the National Dialogue Conference in Khartoum, nearly two years after having first announced his initiative to resolve the conflicts and political crises in Sudan. Even though major opposition parties, armed movements and civil society boycotted the process, the dialogue was attended by 112 political parties and 30 armed movements, mainly splinter factions of the major movements. Specialized committees on peace and unity, the economy, freedoms and basic rights, issues of identity, foreign relations and issues of governance and overall implementation were formed as part of the dialogue. By late February 2016, it was reported that consensus within the committees had been reached on several issues, including Sudanese identity and guidelines for the constitutional review process. On the issue of transitional arrangements, most of the non-National Congress Party participants reportedly recommended a four-year national reconciliation government to be

established within three months of the endorsement of the recommendations of the National Dialogue Conference. The process, which was originally scheduled to conclude on 10 January 2016, has been extended twice so as to allow the committees to finalize their discussions and convince key opposition groups and armed movements to join the process. Having concluded their work, on 9 May, the committees announced their readiness to present their reports to the President and to discuss arrangements for the General Conference of the National Dialogue to approve their recommendations.

19. As a result of the impasse on the way forward with respect to the cessation of hostilities and the national dialogue process, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel convened strategic consultations between the Government and members of the "Sudan Call" coalition (National Umma Party, JEM, SLA/MM, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement — North (SPLM/North)), in Addis Ababa, from 18 to 21 March 2016. At the end of the meeting, the Government and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel signed a road map agreement, presented to the parties by the latter, providing for, inter alia, the immediate resumption of the talks on a cessation of hostilities in Darfur and the Two Areas, leading to a permanent ceasefire agreement, and for an urgent meeting to be convened between the National Dialogue's "7+7 Committee" and the "Sudan Call" coalition, in Addis Ababa, to discuss their participation in the process. The opposition initially requested more time for internal consultations before signing the road map, but subsequently rejected it in its present form, arguing that it endorsed the non-inclusive National Dialogue in Khartoum. On 21 April 2016, at a meeting of its leadership in Paris, members of the "Sudan Call" coalition reaffirmed their position of not signing the road map, accusing the African Union High-level Implementation Panel of siding with the Government and circumventing the recommendations of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for the holding of a preparatory meeting on the National Dialogue. The African Union and the United Nations have called on the opposition to sign the road map as an important milestone in determining a practicable way forward towards a cessation of hostilities and an inclusive, credible National Dialogue.

III. Assessment of benchmarks

A. Inclusive peace process through mediation between the Government and non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur

Negotiations between the Government of the Sudan and non-signatory armed movements

20. Further to the communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union of 25 August 2015, from 19 to 23 November 2015, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel convened direct and synchronized talks on Darfur and the Two Areas in Addis Ababa. During the meeting, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel submitted a draft cessation of hostilities agreement to the parties, which would facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and pave the way for the participation of the armed movements in the national dialogue process. Despite their commitment to continue negotiations, the Government and JEM and

SLA/MM remained in disagreement over key issues related to the role of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel mediation in future negotiations. Another informal round of talks between the parties was convened by UNAMID and the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, from 23 to 25 January 2016, in Debre Zeit (Bishoftu), Ethiopia, but did not result in any progress in this regard. Meanwhile, the sole armed movement maintaining military operations in Darfur, SLA/AW, continued to reject any direct talks with the Government during this time.

21. As a follow-up to the meeting held in Debre Zeit, the Joint Special Representative for UNAMID held consultations with the leadership of JEM and SLA/MM in Addis Ababa, on 15 April, to discuss issues pertaining to the peace process. The two movements expressed readiness for further discussions with the Government of the Sudan, facilitated by UNAMID and the Government of Qatar. On 22 April 2016, following another meeting in Paris, JEM, SLA/MM and SPLM/North issued a statement extending for an additional six months their unilateral cessation of hostilities, initially declared in September 2015. They further called on the African Union High-level Implementation Panel to facilitate a meeting between them and the Government of the Sudan aimed at implementing the cessation of hostilities.

Administrative referendum in Darfur

22. The referendum to determine the administrative status of the region took place from 11 to 13 April 2016. In accordance with the terms of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, the aim of the referendum was to determine whether Darfur would be one region or retain the current five-state structure. Non-signatory movements categorically rejected the holding of the referendum, as part of their continued rejection of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur as a comprehensive peace agreement, while the officials of the Darfur Regional Authority cautioned against its timing, noting the lack of consensus among their constituencies in Darfur, particularly internally displaced persons, and also in view of the possible impact of the ongoing National Dialogue. Following the announcement of the exact date of the referendum in mid-January 2016, which coincided with the resumption of fighting in Jebel Marra, internally displaced persons from various camps in Central, South and West Darfur organized demonstrations to protest against the referendum process and the fighting in early February 2016.

23. Voting took place in 1,368 registration and polling centres, across Darfur, without any major security incidents. The voter eligibility criteria, requiring residency in Darfur for at least three months, meant that refugees and a number of internally displaced persons uprooted as a result of the Government's counter-insurgency operations, were excluded from the process. On 24 April 2016, the Referendum Commission announced that 97.27 per cent of voters had opted for Darfur to retain the five-state structure. The Referendum Commission reported that approximately 90.72 per cent of registered voters (3,585,105 were registered out of 4,588,300 eligible) participated in the process. The voting process was observed by the African Union Commission and the League of Arab States. The non-signatory armed movements have rejected the outcome of the referendum.

Implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur

24. Progress in the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur has been slow. As a result, a number of the provisions of the agreement remained outstanding after the passing of the stipulated deadlines. Owing to the discord between the signatory movements within the Darfur Regional Authority, as well as gaps in funding and insufficient political will, the anticipated dividends from the institutions of the Darfur Regional Authority, including for reconstruction and return or resettlement of internally displaced persons and refugees, remained elusive. With regard to the power-sharing provisions, implementation has focused mainly on the establishment of the institutions provided for in the agreement and corresponding political appointments, without significant progress on governance or institutional capacity-building, including for the Special Criminal Court on the Events in Darfur and the Darfur Land Commission.

25. The second phase of the Darfur internal dialogue and consultations process, which was launched in June 2015, was completed in 21 localities in Central, North, South and West Darfur, followed by meetings of Darfuri stakeholders in Khartoum. The discussions focused on the root causes of the conflict, including intercommunal violence, the sharing of power resources, justice and reconciliation and the role of the local communities. Following the Government's release of 50 per cent of its pledged contribution, in February 2016, the process resumed in a further 26 localities, in May 2016.

26. With respect to the final security arrangements, in December 2015 and January 2016, UNAMID, in collaboration with the Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, supported by other stakeholders, including the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme, conducted a demobilization exercise of signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement and of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, in Central and West Darfur. A total of 1,482 ex-combatants, including 189 from the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM) and 1,293 from signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement, were demobilized, with technical and logistical support from UNAMID.

27. In April 2016, the Government announced that, with the near full implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, including through the holding of the administrative referendum and plans for the return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin and for civilian disarmament, the term of the Darfur Regional Authority, which expires in July 2016, would not be renewed. The Government further indicated that specialized commissions provided for under the Doha Document would continue to exist and possibly report to the Presidency.

B. Protection of civilians and unhindered humanitarian access and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel

Physical security

28. Civilians in Darfur continued to suffer from the impact of the conflict, stemming from the fighting between the Government and SLA/AW, intercommunal violence and attacks from organized criminal groups and militias. With the resumption of fighting in Jebel Marra in mid-January 2016, the mission received numerous reports of indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population, including

through aerial bombardment resulting in new explosive remnants of war contaminations and related accidents, which could not be verified owing to access not being granted by the Government.

29. Intercommunal conflict also resulted in significant displacement and created a serious rift in the local social fabric in certain parts of Darfur. In East Darfur, for example, the Ma'alia community was displaced from the state capital of Ed Daein eastwards to Adila and Abu Karinka following fighting with the Southern Rezeigat in August 2013. In West Darfur, increased attacks by Arab groups on Massalit, Fur, Tama and Burgo caused new displacements, including approximately 2,000 individuals from Shustah village in Beida locality in June 2015, approximately 5,000 from 12 villages in the Mouli area near El Geneina and another 3,000 from 17 villages in Umtajok in Kreinik locality in January 2016. Although most of the newly displaced persons in West Darfur have returned to their places of origin, the threat of further intercommunal violence remains.

30. The conflict also continued to have a significant impact on the law and order situation in Darfur. Organized criminals, including armed nomads and militia groups, have taken advantage of the security vacuum in the region to commit various criminal acts, including attacks against and harassment of the civilian population, murder, rape, armed robberies, abductions and arson. In addition, internally displaced farmers across Darfur were frequently prevented from accessing their farmlands by Arab herders and subjected to physical attacks, threats, harassment and the destruction of crops. In West Darfur, for example, internally displaced farmers near the Krinding I and II, Kreinik and Sisi camps for internally displaced persons east of El Geneina were prevented from freely accessing their farmlands by armed Arab men demanding payment for the use of the land or written forfeiture of their ownership rights during the harvest season.

31. State governors have adopted a series of measures in attempts to curb criminality, including the deployment of additional security forces to population centres, instituting a ban on the carrying of weapons and the use of unregistered vehicles, removing illegal checkpoints and taking punitive action against security personnel involved in crimes. Such measures have, in the cases of East and West Darfur in particular, translated into increasing resentment from groups of Arab descent and increased crimes targeting Government personnel. Furthermore, despite an overall reduction in criminal incidents in some population centres, criminality across Darfur, particularly on the outskirts of towns and in more remote areas, remained high.

Protective environment

Human rights, sexual and gender-based violence

32. Conditions of insecurity, brought about by the conflict, continue to exacerbate civilian vulnerabilities, resulting in killings, physical injuries, abductions, sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. Impunity remains a serious challenge constituting a threat to the peace process and civilians who, for the most part, continue to be denied the right of redress. The number of violations of international humanitarian law has increased since the launch of Operation Decisive Summer in February 2014. Government authorities have not investigated allegations of crimes committed against civilians by their security forces, except in a few instances, instead attributing such actions to armed criminal elements. Victim and

witness accounts gathered by UNAMID describe the continued burning of villages, looting of civilian property, including livestock, destruction of sources of livelihood critical to civilian survival and aerial bombardment. Yet, owing to the perception that the perpetrators belong to Government forces and to the lack of action from law enforcement agencies, victims and witnesses are reluctant to report such violations to the authorities.

33. The lengthy conflict, widespread proliferation of weapons and frequent intercommunal fighting have all added to the risk of exposure and the vulnerability of civilians, especially women and girls, to sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, including in camps for internally displaced persons. During the rainy and migration seasons, cases of sexual and gender-based violence often take place outside of camps, when internally displaced women and girls engage in livelihood activities such as farming and firewood collection. Such incidents are accompanied by the looting of property. Despite efforts by UNAMID to provide security escorts to internally displaced women and girls as they undertake such activities, threats and violence, including sexual harassment and rape, continue. Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence are faced with a range of challenges including social stigma, police inaction and the serious capacity deficit in the justice sector. Such inaction has made victims reluctant to report incidents of sexual and gender-based violence to the police.

Rule of law and justice system

34. Formal rule of law institutions continue to lack both the human resources and the institutional capacity to cover the whole of Darfur, with little or no presence of government authority in the form of courts, police stations, prosecution offices, prisons and local administration in many localities. Out of 65 localities, formal courts are located in only 19 and Government police stations in 29, which means that only about one third of Darfuris have the possibility of access to criminal justice institutions. Furthermore, the capacity of the native administration to facilitate the dispensation of informal or traditional justice has been severely weakened as a result of its politicization by the Government.

35. Funding constraints resulting from years of inadequate budgetary allocations and the conflict in the region have also continued to have an adverse impact on the prison system, leading to multiple institutional, structural, logistical and human resources-related challenges. Of 13 Government prisons in Darfur, seven are located in North Darfur, three in South Darfur and one each in Central, East and West Darfur. Detention conditions that do not comply with the international minimum standards, including overcrowding and a lack of basic, life-sustaining services, undermine public safety and trust in the criminal justice system, as well as prisoners' rights.

36. In recent years, the Government has implemented additional measures to fight impunity and strengthen accountability, including the establishment of the Special Criminal Court on the Events in Darfur and its Special Prosecutor in 2012, together with amendments to the Sudanese Criminal Act which brought specific offences under the purview of international humanitarian law, the deployment of new prosecutors and the inauguration of the Supreme Court Division for Darfur states in Nyala, South Darfur. Those measures are yet to produce concrete results, owing to the persistent conflict. The Sudanese judicial system is sufficient and the Special

Criminal Court is capable of prosecuting atrocities and serious crimes. Accountability remains a significant concern, however, with most of the cases recorded and prosecuted by the Special Criminal Court involving lesser offences of an ordinary criminal nature.

Status of internally displaced persons in Darfur

37. The Darfur conflict has had a particularly adverse impact on internally displaced persons. Out of 2.6 million displaced civilians, some 1.6 million remain in 60 camps for internally displaced persons across the region. The remainder are located in various gatherings outside camps and within host communities. Over 760,000 internally displaced persons are located in South Darfur, approximately 700,000 in North Darfur, 450,000 in Central Darfur, 380,000 in East Darfur and over 320,000 in West Darfur.

38. Internally displaced persons across Darfur have voiced their rejection of the Government's plans regarding the closure of camps for internally displaced persons, arguing that no voluntary return to their places of origin would be possible in the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement that provides for security, stability, justice, access to basic services, compensation and land rights. In particular, internally displaced persons have highlighted the ongoing fighting in Jebel Marra, including aerial bombardment, attacks and harassment by Arab militia and occupation of their land in places of origin as key concerns. In direct contradiction to the Government's position, as articulated by the Second Vice-President in December 2015, internally displaced persons have maintained that the conditions are not in place for them to begin a new life in their areas of origin or to settle sustainably elsewhere. After more than a decade, many of the internally displaced persons, who have been displaced since the conflict began in 2003, are now accustomed to living in an urban environment and would expect a similar level of services in their places of origin.

Facilitation of humanitarian assistance and safety and security of humanitarian personnel

39. Given the significant and increasing needs in Darfur, the provision of emergency humanitarian relief remained a key priority for humanitarian actors in Darfur. UNAMID continued to facilitate the work of such actors primarily through the provision of armed escorts for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas and the creation of a safe and secure environment for humanitarian personnel. Humanitarian actors relied heavily on such services, particularly in the light of security conditions, significant restrictions on access and the overall lack of an adequate presence of Government police. Humanitarian and development actors further relied on the mission's team sites throughout the region for the implementation of their programmes, including for pre-positioning of humanitarian assistance where other secure storage facilities were not available, and for accommodation. The operational constraints faced by UNAMID also had an impact on the availability of security escorts for humanitarian missions.

C. Prevention or mitigation of community conflict through mediation and, in conjunction with the country team, measures to address root causes

40. In the face of increasing levels of intercommunal violence over the past few years, the Sudanese authorities, particularly at the state level, have declared the maintenance of security as one of their main priorities. As part of their efforts, they have deployed security forces to hotspots and established buffer zones between warring communities, enhanced mediation engagement with local communities by the federal, state and local government to achieve cessation of hostilities and reconciliation agreements, and, in some cases, arrested individuals involved in violent acts.

41. Most recently, in April 2016, the Government announced its intention to implement a civilian disarmament campaign for the collection of illegal weapons, which will be conducted in two phases: a time-bound voluntary phase, during which the owner would receive financial compensation; followed by a forcible phase, during which all carriers of weapons, with the exception of regular forces, would be subjected to the process. In an attempt to address conflict between farmers and nomadic herders (with the exception of East Darfur, which has its ad hoc mechanisms), each state government has established crop protection committees to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts between farmers and nomadic herders. In East Darfur, the deployment of Government forces to Labado improved security and minor incidents of farm destruction were resolved through traditional mechanisms.

IV. Challenges to mandate implementation

42. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and humanitarian actors continued to face considerable challenges in the implementation of their respective mandates in Darfur. During this period, UNAMID was the target of nine armed attacks, as well as other criminal acts (break-ins, burglaries and theft, robberies, carjackings and assaults), mainly committed by criminal groups or militia, as well as denials of access and freedom of movement. Further, mandate implementation was hampered by restrictions, particularly in terms of access, and denials and delays in the issuance of visas for international civilian staff and in the clearance of container shipments at Port Sudan.

43. In an effort to jointly address many of those challenges, the African Union, the United Nations and UNAMID consistently engaged the Government on the impediments, within the framework of a high-level meeting between the Deputy Secretary-General, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, held in New York on 29 September 2015, and two strategic-level tripartite meetings held in Addis Ababa, on 28 January 2016, and in New York, on 22 March 2016. Communication in this regard improved with the arrival of the new UNAMID leadership team and the convening of three technical-level tripartite meetings between the Government and the mission, since January 2016. During the most recent strategic-level tripartite meeting, held on 22 March 2016, the Government of the Sudan assured the participants of its intention to address all outstanding operational issues with the required urgency,

with progress to be reviewed within a period of two weeks. Despite such assurances, however, significant operational impediments persist.

A. Visas

44. Since 1 July 2015, UNAMID has experienced a significant increase in the level of denials and delays in visa issuance, particularly for international staff in the mission's substantive civilian sections. In addition, in October 2015, the Government changed its previous practice regarding resident visas for UNAMID staff by decreasing the period of renewal from 12 months to 6 months. As a result, the work of UNAMID in those areas has been significantly hampered, while the increasing uncertainty for current and prospective staff has had an impact on the mission's ability to attract and retain talent. Currently, the overall vacancy rate for international civilian professionals is 31 per cent. The sections most severely affected remain human rights (47 per cent vacancy rate), protection of civilians (50 per cent vacancy rate), communications and public information (33 per cent vacancy rate), and security (50 per cent vacancy rate), as well as the Joint Operations Centre (41 per cent vacancy rate).

45. From 1 July 2015 to 15 May 2016, the Government approved 2,247 visas, including 97 for civilian staff members, 386 for military and 871 for police. The remainder were contractors, official visitors and dependents. At the same time, a total of 39 visas were rejected, including 19 for civilian staff members and one for police. The rejections included selected candidates for such crucial senior positions as the Principal Humanitarian Affairs Officer and the Senior Women's Protection Adviser, on two occasions each. Resident visas for the Acting and Deputy Joint Special Representative and the Head of Office for West Darfur were renewed for only two months, while applications for the Head of Office in South Darfur and the Deputy Head of the Human Rights Section were rejected. In March and April 2016, out of the 97 rejected civilian visas from 2015, the Government approved 17, mainly for substantive staff, which were included in a prioritized list of 29 submitted by UNAMID to the Government on 24 February 2016. As some of those staff members had waited for very long periods to obtain their entry visas, several accepted offers of employment elsewhere and only 12 are in the process of joining the mission. The other 80 visas rejected in 2015 remain outstanding.

B. Customs clearance

46. After delays in the clearance of food rations for military and police contingents in the second half of 2015 resulted in severe shortages and the decrease of stocks to less than 20 days, the situation was temporarily resolved by late October 2015. As of 20 May 2016, however, a total of 511 shipments are still at Port Sudan pending release by the Government. Out of those, 202 containers were for food rations. Based on the amount of current reserve stocks, UNAMID is expected to run out of food rations for its contingents by 28 June 2016. Items that remain in Port Sudan, some of which have been held since April 2015, also include vehicles, armoured personnel carriers and other military equipment, spare parts, self-sustainment and medical supplies and defence material. On 19 May, UNAMID was informed of the decision of the Ministry of Finance to release 118 of the shipments (which include 189 containers of food rations, five water tankers and 51 pallets and

packages). The mission is following up with the authorities in order to ensure the swift release of the shipments.

47. Delays in the clearance of containers containing military and police equipment severely impeded the ability of the mission to protect civilians and themselves, to communicate and to conduct robust patrols. In South Darfur, for example, a complete battalion is currently without personal weapons, and another military unit is unable to perform its mandated tasks as most of its armoured personnel carriers are either in Port Sudan or under repair. Military and police personnel across the mission area are living with shortages in sustainment supplies, including ammunition and medical and communications equipment, which has also affected overall troop morale.

C. Access and freedom of movement for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

48. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur continued to face severe restrictions on its access and freedom of movement in Darfur, particularly on its patrols and verification missions to Jebel Marra and other conflict areas in the aftermath of intercommunal clashes and attacks on the civilian population. The vast majority of movement restrictions were imposed by the Sudanese authorities in violation of the status-of-forces agreement. As justification for the restrictions, the Government most often cited insecurity and its obligation to protect UNAMID under that agreement, as well as the lack of necessary clearance. As a result of such restrictions, UNAMID could not immediately undertake critical security and assessment missions to areas of fighting between Government forces and armed movements and intercommunal violence, such as parts of Jebel Marra in Central Darfur, Anka in North Darfur and Mouli in West Darfur. UNAMID also experienced flight restrictions, which increased following the resumption of fighting in Jebel Marra in mid-January 2016, particularly for flights to locations of civilian displacement.

D. Challenges faced by the country team

49. Humanitarian actors regularly reported the cancellation of planned missions owing to the denial of or delays in granting travel requests, particularly to areas most affected by the conflict, as well as other restrictions. Areas of conflict in Jebel Marra, particularly in Central Darfur, remained largely inaccessible. However, an inter-agency assessment mission was able to reach Fanga Suk in November 2015 for the first time since 2011. Assessments also reached Fanga Suk and Rockero town in April 2016, the latter reached for the first time by international partners since 2005. Initial food distribution was conducted in Nertiti, Thur and Guldo, Central Darfur, in April 2016, but no missions to assess needs or provide multisectoral assistance have been allowed. Since the resumption of fighting in Jebel Marra, over a third of field-level access requests have been denied. Humanitarian actors were also unable to secure timely access to people displaced from Mouli and surrounding areas in El Geneina, West Darfur, in January 2016.

50. Funding constraints also affected the humanitarian response. The humanitarian response plan for 2015 had a funding shortfall of 42 per cent (over $430 million),

the fourth consecutive year in which the funding gap has been 40 per cent or higher. As a result, humanitarian operations have had to be scaled down, particularly in sectors with higher funding gaps such as protection and return, recovery and integration. Between August 2015 and April 2016, five international partners were either closed down by the authorities or left Darfur owing to financial or operational difficulties. While the 2016 response plan has not yet been finalized, only $105 million has been received to date.

51. The lack of funding to support the effective implementation of the Darfur Development Strategy also remained a key issue. In December 2015, the first instalment of $10 million was received by the United Nations Fund for Recovery, Reconstruction and Development in Darfur, for 12 joint projects that have commenced in four localities in Central, North and West Darfur.

V. Troop-to-task review

52. Taking into account the volatile security situation and the continued large-scale displacement of persons in Darfur since 1 July, the troop-to-task review assessed the authorized strength of the military and police components and their deployment in detail. It recommended that the current numbers of uniformed personnel be retained in order to enable the mission to maintain a credible footprint in conflict-affected areas for the protection of civilians. In order to effectively implement its protection of civilians and facilitation of humanitarian assistance mandate, the review found that UNAMID should ensure a higher degree of flexibility in the deployment of its military contingent.

53. With only 14 out of an authorized strength of 16 battalions deployed, the mission's military component is currently overstretched. The mission will further consider options to compensate for the lack of predictable mobility by enhancing the capacities of team sites with greater operational significance, through the deployment of troops. To accommodate this reinforcement, other locations will be considered for reductions in strength or even closure.

54. At the same time, and in line with the conflict analysis above, the review concurred with UNAMID plans to establish new team sites in Anka, North Darfur, Adila/Abu Karinka, East Darfur and Um Dukhun, Central Darfur, for which Government approval remains pending. As a means of achieving the desired flexibility, the sixteenth battalion would be reconfigured into a highly mobile reserve capability, while the planned induction of the military utility helicopter unit would complement the mission's quick reaction capability.

55. At present, UNAMID has a 26 per cent vacancy rate for individual police officers, which is the result of delays in the issuance of visas, the repatriation and non-replacement of police officers from certain police-contributing countries and bureaucratic delays in their deployment. Given the importance of individual police officers in engaging with internally displaced persons and local communities, Government police and humanitarian actors, there is a further need to increase their field presence. The review recommended the streamlining of posts from mission and sector headquarters to team sites, which are understaffed, as well as from currently less operationally significant team sites.

56. Given the importance of female police officers for interactions with internally displaced persons, the Secretariat will redouble its efforts to increase the number of female officers from police-contributing countries. A more flexible deployment of formed police units across sector boundaries will be initiated to ensure adequate protection for the internally displaced population. With respect to military and police integration, a need for enhanced coordination and planning has been identified, particularly for joint contingency planning based on common threat assessments.

VI. Exit strategy

57. Further to Security Council resolution 2228 (2015) and the communiqués of 22 June and 31 July 2015 of the Peace and Security Council, the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan continued their discussions on the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID based on the benchmarks set out by the Peace and Security Council and the Security Council. The discussions took place within the framework of a high-level meeting held on the margins of the General Assembly, in September 2015, and of three strategic-level tripartite meetings that have been held so far in 2016, in Addis Ababa, New York and Khartoum.

58. The Joint Working Group, which was set up between the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan in February 2015 to discuss an exit strategy, reconvened on 18 April in Khartoum, and from 12 to 22 May to visit the five states of Darfur. In each state, the Joint Working Group was briefed by the Governors and their governments, by UNAMID and by representatives of internally displaced persons. The Group also met with the Chairman of the Darfur Regional Authority. All meetings took place in a cordial and constructive atmosphere.

59. Following the trip to Darfur, the Joint Working Group held discussions in Khartoum and evaluated the implementation of the benchmarks and agreed on recommendations, the implementation of which will provide elements for an exit strategy that will enable the gradual and phased handover of mandated tasks to the Government of the Sudan and the country team, taking into account the conditions on the ground and the availability of financial resources. The Group did not reach a consensus, however, on the issue of the reconfiguration of the mission and its drawdown.

60. The outcome of the meeting of the Joint Working Group was discussed at the twenty-first tripartite meeting, held on 23 May, during which the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations endorsed all the agreed recommendations of the Group and requested the Group to reconvene to review the implementation of its recommendations and the three benchmarks, within four months.

VII. Recommendations

61. Since 1 July 2015, the nature of the Darfur conflict has remained largely unchanged owing to three factors. First, there has been no concrete progress towards a comprehensive political resolution to the conflict, since the Government of the

Sudan and the non-signatory armed movements are unable to agree on the way forward. Second, as the root causes and the consequences of the conflict remain largely unaddressed, intercommunal violence continues to be a prominent source of insecurity and instability throughout the region. Third, while direct clashes between Government and armed movement forces have subsided, the fighting with SLA/AW in Jebel Marra has resulted in additional suffering and displacement of the civilian population in Darfur.

62. The three strategic priorities of UNAMID, and their corresponding benchmarks, remain valid. Within the framework of those priorities, and given the situation in Darfur, it is our recommendation that UNAMID focus its efforts on two issues in particular: first, protecting the displaced; and, second, addressing the increasing threat of intercommunal violence in Darfur.

63. **The protection of internally displaced persons**. In a situation of continuing armed conflict between Government forces and the armed movements, and widespread intercommunal violence and attacks against civilians, the current conditions in Darfur are not conducive to a large-scale return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin. While taking note of the Government's determination to see the displaced return to their areas of origin or resettle in their current areas of displacement, any returns should be safe, voluntary and based on the informed consent of the displaced themselves, in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Returns must also be accompanied by durable solutions involving all relevant actors, including internally displaced persons and host communities, and based on reliable, up-to-date baseline data on the needs, protection concerns, demography and intentions of the internally displaced persons themselves. UNAMID will support the efforts of humanitarian partners and provide protection to the displaced during this process by prioritizing its activities and existing resources based on a mapping of the protection situation in camps for internally displaced persons, areas at risk of further displacement and potential areas of return across Darfur. UNAMID will implement its protection of civilians mandate in this context, in accordance with its current preventive and responsive initiatives and its protective environment-building initiatives. The mission will continue to engage with the Government and work in coordination with the country team and humanitarian actors in line with their respective mandates and with due respect for humanitarian principles.

64. **Tackling intercommunal violence**. Various initiatives have been launched by the Government in order to curb the significant levels of intercommunal violence in Darfur. Those efforts, however, are not sustainable in the absence of a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of the conflict in Darfur. Such a strategy would entail the conclusion of a comprehensive political agreement, following extensive consultations with all stakeholders on key issues such as the equitable management of land and other resources, that fully recognizes and upholds the rights of farmers and nomadic herders and empowers traditional and other local conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, while strengthening the capacity of the criminal justice system to maintain law and order and ensure accountability for crimes.

65. Given the persistent nature of this form of violence and its continued intensity, UNAMID will further prioritize its mandate implementation efforts by strengthening existing activities and devising a mission-wide approach to address

intercommunal conflicts. Building on its mandated activities relating to the protection of civilians and support to local dispute resolution, the strategy would be based on prevention, mitigation and protection, including efforts to address some of the triggers and causes of such conflicts, albeit, in most cases, temporarily. Specifically, the strategy would prioritize the allocation of the mission's existing resources to support ongoing mediation or reconciliation processes and strengthen early warning mechanisms, while concentrating on the protection of civilians. To achieve more durable solutions, UNAMID would also work with the country team to enhance the capacity of government and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, to encourage reform and to mobilize additional resources for addressing the root causes of intercommunal violence.

66. Conscious of the fact that the situation in Darfur can only be addressed through a mutually beneficial process, the leadership of UNAMID should continue working with the Government to improve relations in order to create a supportive and safe working environment for the mission. It is critical that the Government take all necessary steps to enable UNAMID and humanitarian actors to implement their respective mandates by removing all outstanding impediments to their operations and providing full and unhindered access and freedom of movement, issuing visas for international civilian staff and clearing shipments at Port Sudan.

67. The above-mentioned measures will serve to enhance the impact of UNAMID efforts to ensure that the people of Darfur are protected and to work towards the resolution of the conflict. However, it cannot be resolved in the absence of a comprehensive political solution. We commend the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and UNAMID for their efforts to revitalize the Darfur peace process by engaging with the non-signatory movements. Since there can be no military solution to the conflict in Darfur, all parties to the conflict must immediately resume direct talks in good faith. We strongly urge SLA/AW to join the peace process, without any preconditions, in order to achieve a cessation of hostilities as a first step towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement.

68. Given the current situation in Darfur and the limited progress towards meeting UNAMID benchmarks, and pending the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Working Group, which will be enhanced by the renewed focus of the mission on the protection of internally displaced persons and addressing intercommunal violence, as set out above, we recommend that the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union consider extending the mandate of UNAMID for 12 months, until 30 June 2017, without modifying its priorities or adjusting its authorized troop and police ceiling.